

The suffering of refugees in Ghassan Kanafani's "The Child Goes to the Camp": a critical appraisal

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to present a critical appraisal of Ghassan Kanafani's short story "The Child Goes to the Camp" using the Appraisal Theory proposed by Martin and Rose (2007) in an attempt to investigate the predicament of the Palestinians who were forced to flee their country and live in refugee camps as well as the various effects refugee life had on them.

Design/methodology/approach – Using the Appraisal Theory, and with a special focus on the categories of Attitude and Graduation, the paper aims to shed light on the plight of refugees through revealing the narrator's suffering in a refugee camp where the most important virtue becomes remaining alive.

Findings – Analysing the story using the Appraisal Theory reveals the impact refugee life has left on the narrator and his family. This story serves as a warning for the world of the suffering refugees have to endure when they are forced to flee their war-torn countries.

Originality/value – Although Kanafani's resistance literature has been studied extensively, his short stories have not received much scholarly attention. In addition, his works have not been subject to linguistic analysis. This study presents an appraisal analysis of Kanafani's "The Child Goes to the Camp" in an attempt to investigate how the author's linguistic choices are key to highlighting the suffering of the Palestinians, especially children, in refugee camps.

Keywords Attitude, Refugee camps, Appraisal theory, Graduation, Resistance literature, The Nakba

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

With the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, violence has stricken the region. Amidst calls for freedom and human rights on the one hand and fights for political interests on the other hand, countries were torn and civilians murdered and displaced. Holding to dear life, many Arabs fled their war-torn countries, seeking safety and refuge in neighbouring, as well as Western, countries. For example, since the Syrian civil war started on March 15, 2011, and tore the nation apart, hundreds of thousands of Syrians were killed, and many more were displaced. Now, according to Reid (2020), "the Syrian refugee crisis is the largest refugee and



displacement crisis of our time” for “about 5.6 million Syrians are refugees, and another 6.2 million people are displaced within Syria”. The Syrians who fled their ruined country risked their lives on their way to Europe or tried building new homes in neighbouring countries (Mercy Corps, 2020), and many of them had no options other than refugee camps. Refugee life, however, has its own problems and poses its own threats. For example, the nearly 120,000 Syrians living in Jordan’s refugee camps have been on a lockdown since the outbreak of the coronavirus. With limited access to health and sanitation facilities, however, and with large numbers of people living in small spaces, it is not easy to predict the resulting losses if the pandemic reached those camps (Dunmore and Cherri, 2020).

The issue of refugees, however, is not a recent one. According to Loescher (1996, p. 10), the twentieth century witnessed a “global refugee problem”. Peteeet, a professor of anthropology, explains that violence and ethnic cleansing, which were part and parcel of expanding and consolidating states, played a major role in displacements, diasporas and forced migrations (2005, p. vii). However, the most prominent refugee problem in the twentieth century was that of Palestinian refugees. Ouyang (1998, p. 223) suggests that:

[. . .] perhaps no single catastrophe in recent history can rival that which befell the Palestinians, who have been forced into life under occupation, or out of their homeland and into exile since 1948,

and according to Peteeet (2005, p. 2), the displacement of Palestinians and turning them into refugees was “embedded in a logic of displacement integral to a particular form of ethnonational, neocolonial state formation and consolidation”. Today, while there are millions of Palestinians who are displaced in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and inside Israel, the majority of Palestinians are scattered across the Middle East and beyond (Saloul, 2012, p. 1).

Various literary works were dedicated to depicting the trauma of the Palestinians after the loss of their land. LeGassick (1971, p. 491) argues that the literature produced in a certain society mirrors the interests and concerns of the culture and society it is produced in, and Arabic literature is a case in point. Many Arabic literary works tackle what LeGassick describes as “the Arab world’s most fundamental concern” which is the struggle with Israel. Such works serve as “a medium in which Arab intellectuals are expressing their personal reactions and those of their society to this tragic problem” (LeGassick, 1971, p. 491). Those writers, whose writings constitute a form of resistance, write in an attempt to defend themselves and their people (Bader, 2016, p. 12). Their writings tackle “themes of loss, self-loss, disappointment, disillusion and expulsion” to express the feelings of the Palestinians who were forced to flee their homes (Bader, 2016, p. 27). The short story genre in particular was “an arena of struggle” for registering the political convictions of those writers as well as their belief in the inevitability of change (Allaham, 2009, p. 2), and chief among those writers was the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani. Against this backdrop, this paper presents a critical appraisal of Ghassan Kanafani’s short story “The Child Goes to the Camp” which is narrated from the point of view of a Palestinian child living in a refugee camp. Using the Appraisal Theory, proposed by Martin and Rose (2007), the paper presents an analysis of the story in an attempt to investigate how the language used reflects the narrator’s view of life in the refugee camp as well as the inhumane circumstances refugees live under after being displaced from their homeland. In so doing, the paper attempts to answer two main research questions: how does the language used in the narrative reflect the feelings of the narrator towards reality as well as towards the other characters in “the time of hostilities” as he describes life in the camp? And how does his appraisal of life in the camp reflect the suffering of Palestinians who fled their country after the Nakba in an attempt to survive?

2. Review of the literature

2.1 *The Nakba (catastrophe)*

The Arabic word “Nakba”, meaning “catastrophe”, is used by Arabs to refer to the 1948 War (which resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel and the loss of Palestine) as well as the events that took place before and after it (Saloul, 2012, p. 1). The term “Nakba”, which was coined by Costantine Zurayk, a Syrian historian and intellectual (Khoury, 2012, p. 255), could be defined as “the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Arab Palestinians from great swathes of Palestine in 1948 by the Zionist drive towards the creation of Israel” (Farag, 2017, p. xi), and the Nakba represents a “major trauma in collective Arab memory” (p. xii). The tragedy of the Palestinians, however, goes back decades before 1948. With the fall of the Ottoman empire by the end of World War I, after ruling Palestine for four centuries, Palestine fell under the British Mandate. That was before the British Balfour Declaration in 1917 promised the Jews a “national home” in Palestine (Peteet, 2005, p. 2; Ahmed, 1989, p. 4). During the 1920s and the 1930s, Arabs started a series of revolts against what they deemed to be Zionist colonialism (Ahmed, 1989, p. 5). In 1947, Britain turned to the United Nations the Zionist claim to Palestine, and the United Nations planned a partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. The partition, which was voted for on November 29, 1947, and was backed by both the USA and the Soviet Union, ignited the war for Palestine (p. 3). The British withdrew from Palestine on May 14, 1948, and on the same day, the establishment of the state of Israel on Palestinian soil was declared (Ahmed, 1989, p. 5), which had “lacerating effects upon innumerable Palestinian Arabs” (Chakraborty, 2018, p. 33).

Simone (as cited in Abdelbary, 2019) argues that the Nakba is a core Palestinian memory, for it was not only a military defeat, but “a trauma which led to uprooting Palestinians from their land” (translation mine), resulting in their displacement and becoming refugees. According to Chakraborty (2018, p. 35):

[. . .] [f]rom the mid twentieth century to the present, Judaization of Palestine has been continuing with consolidation of the state of Israel and the concomitant annihilation, displacement, deprivation and/or diasporization of Palestinian Arabs

The Zionist militias played a major role in terrorizing the Palestinians to force them to flee their homes or else get killed (Bader, 2016, p. 28). As a result, more than half of the nearly 1.4 million Palestinian Arabs fled their homes and country (Khalidi, 2008, p. 12). By 1948, more than 500 Palestinian villages were confiscated and emptied of their inhabitants, and around 750.000 Palestinians had become refugees (Collins, 2011, p. 170). The rest of the Palestinians (around 150.000) remained in Israel and became Israeli citizens (Peteet, 2005, p. 3).

The Palestinians were so overwhelmed by their feelings of loss and defeat that “they found their life dark, dull and meaningless as they became helpless victims in a volatile area” (Suliman and Muhaidat, 2017, p. 27). Driven out of their homes and land, they sought refuge in the (Jordanian-controlled) West Bank, the (Egyptian-controlled) Gaza Strip, Syria and Lebanon (Brynen, 2013, pp. 109–110). In 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was established to attend to the humanitarian, social and economic needs of Palestinian refugees (p. 110), and in the early 1950s, many Palestinians moved to the refugee camps that the UNRWA established in neighbouring countries (Peteet, 2005, p. 6). The Palestinian refugees led a miserable life in these refugee camps which “were structured as a combination of slums and ghettos” (Khoury, 2012, p. 263). They recount how each two families had to live together, and how they would starve to death, freeze in the cold weather, and have their children die due to the lack of medicine (Al Jazeera English, 2013a, 2013b). Moreover, they suffered from different kinds of opposition in the Arab countries,

where they sought refuge, in the fields of politics, work, education, travel, etc. (Khoury, 2012, p. 263).

2.2 Ghassan Kanafani and resistance literature

Abdelbary (2019, p. 28) states that post-Nakba Palestinian literature serves as a record of the suffering of the Palestinians since 1948. Ghassan Kanafani, a key Palestinian author who also experienced refugee life firsthand, coined the term “resistance literature” to “describe Palestinian writing under occupation” (Frag, 2017, p. 12). The term “resistance literature” is used to refer to literary works that tackle the theme of Palestinian resistance and expose the Palestinian struggle for liberation and identity (Al-Hudawi, 2003, p. 17). The value of resistance literature lies in the fact that it provides a human dimension that a historian’s book would certainly lack (pp. 21-22) as it “gives valuable testimony into the traumatic events of the Nakba, ultimately elucidating the experiences of the Palestinians” (Frag, 2017, p. 22). Resistance literature can be regarded as a category of “committed literature”. The notion was proposed by Sartre who argues that committed literature is “committed” to “freedom – Freedom of the author, freedom of the reader, human freedom broadly defined” (p. 24). Kanafani was “committed” to the Palestinian cause, and resistance, exile, poverty and oppression were key themes in his works depicting the life of Palestinians after the Nakba and in refugee camps (Allaham, 2009, pp. 9-10).

Kanafani was born in Acre (Akka), Palestine, in 1936 and fled the country with his family alongside hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during the fighting. He moved with his family to Syria where he worked as a teacher in the UNRWA schools before he moved to Kuwait and then to the Lebanese capital Beirut where he became editor of *Al-Hadaf*, the journal of the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine. A journalist, critic and novelist, Kanafani was a key contributor to the philosophy of Palestinian resistance (Harlow, 2009, p. 21). In addition to his passion for literature and writing, Kanafani was a political activist, and “it was this combination that honored him as the Father of Resistance Literature in Palestine” (Bader, 2016, p. 11). For Kanafani, art and literature were not separable from politics; they were “part and parcel of his political activism and resistance to the usurpation of his homeland” (Coffin, 1996, p. 98).

Allen (1982, p. 108) argues that “[n]o modern Arab novelist has been able to project the tragedy of the Palestinian people in fiction with greater impact than Ghassan Kanafani” for “he devoted his life to the illustration in both fact and fiction of the circumstances of the Palestinians”. His literary works “describe the destitution and trauma suffered by stateless Palestinians in the refugee camps after their expulsion in 1948” (Cleary, 2002, p. 88). Kanafani’s ability to depict Palestinians’ life in refugee camps stems from his firsthand experience as a refugee who “retained deep and vivid impressions from that bitter experience” (Ahmed, 1989, p. 8). In his fiction, Kanafani relies chiefly on his experience as a refugee or the experience of his acquaintances to provide him with material that can be analyzed through his characters’ emotional reactions (Kilpatrick, 1976, p. 18). Kanafani’s political beliefs and activism led to his death in a booby-trapped car explosion in Beirut in 1972 (p. 6).

Despite the fact that Kanafani depicted the Palestinian tragedy in several novels and short stories, his novels, chief among which are *Men in the Sun* and *Returning to Haifa*, received much more scholarly attention than his short fiction (Frag, 2017, p. 57). Nevertheless, Kanafani’s short fiction plays a key role in depicting the trauma of the Palestinians after the Nakba and during living in refugee camps. In the refugee camps in Syria, he started writing his short stories that reflected the reality of the Palestinians who were expelled from their land (Bader, 2016, p. 27). The significance of a short story stems

from the fact that “by its brevity, [it] concentrates on one single highly significant, life changing episode in the life of a single character” (Allaham, 2009, p. 13), which is the case with Kanafani’s stories. When the protagonist is a refugee, the story depicts this refugee’s miserable life in the refugee camps after the displacement and how this refugee reacts to this new life (p. 51). Kanafani’s “The Child Goes to the Camp”, which is analyzed in this paper, is a case in point.

3. Methodology

The theoretical framework used for analyzing Kanafani’s short story is the Appraisal Theory proposed by Martin and Rose (2007). Appraisal involves a process of evaluation, “the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned” (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 25). According to Hart (2014, p. 43), the grammar of evaluation serves the interpersonal function of languages as it provides a source for reacting to the world. Halliday (2007, p. 184) argues that the importance of the interpersonal function stems from the fact that it enables the speaker to be part of the context of situation, “both expressing his own attitudes and judgements and seeking to influence the attitudes and behaviour of others”.

The system of Appraisal includes three main categories: attitude, graduation and engagement (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 25). Attitude refers to “evaluating things, people’s character and their feelings” (p. 26). The system of graduation refers to ways “in which attitudes can be amplified or hedged, developing *force* and *focus* as complementary dimensions” (p. 25). Engagement is a system which can be used to “introduce a range of voices into a text” (p. 25). For the purpose of this paper, there will be a special focus on the category of attitude and the related category of graduation in an attempt to investigate the feelings of the little refugee child in Kanafani’s story, his view of the people around him, especially his family, and his perception of life in the refugee camp.

There are three main types of attitude: affect (expressing emotions), judgement (evaluation of people’s characters) and appreciation (evaluation of the value of things) (Martin and Rose, 2007, pp. 27-28). Feelings can be good or bad, so affect can be positive or negative. In addition, it can be expressed directly or implied (p. 29). Feelings can be expressed as emotional dispositions (e.g. “happy” or “sad”) or surges of behaviour (e.g. “crying” or “laughing”). Both can be manifested as one of three categories of affect: un/happiness, in/security and un/satisfaction. (p. 66). Judgements of people’s characters, too, can be positive or negative. They can be divided into personal judgements of admiration or criticism and moral judgements of praise or condemnation (p. 32). The difference between the two corresponds to the difference between social esteem and social sanction. The former has to do with evaluating people in terms of normality, capacity or tenacity, whereas the latter refers to evaluating people in terms of veracity or propriety (pp. 67-68). Like affect and judgement, appreciation of the value of things can be positive or negative (p. 37). The system of appreciation includes three categories: reaction (i.e. the emotional impact something has on us), composition (i.e. our perception of proportionality) and valuation (i.e. “our assessment of the social significance of the text/process”) (pp. 69-70). Attitude, with its three categories, is also gradable as a speaker can express how strongly he/she feels about someone/something. Expressing gradeability is possible through the categories of force (i.e. words expressing degree of intensity) and focus (i.e. words used to sharpen categories of people and things) (p. 42). Using these categories of the Appraisal system, this paper presents an analysis of Ghassan Kanafani’s “The Child Goes to the Camp” in an attempt to investigate the feelings of the child refugee as well as his perception of his family and life in the refugee camp.

4. Data

The text analyzed in this paper is a short story entitled “The Child Goes to the Camp” by Ghassan Kanafani, which is included in a collection entitled *On Men and Guns* that was first published in 1968. The narrator of the story is Mansour, a young Palestinian child who lives with his parents and seven siblings as well as his aunt’s family (which consists of seven members) and his grandfather in a refugee camp during a time which he describes as “the time of hostilities”. Mansour argues that during a time of starvation, severe cold and suffering, family bonds are lost, and morals make way for hatred and selfishness. In the time of hostilities, the only virtue becomes “remaining alive”.

The only thing Mansour and his cousin Essam can do for a living is going to the food market to collect rotten food and leftovers on which the family survives, and during their daily journey to the market and back, which they go on barefoot, the two cousins fight each other and also fight with other children over the rotten food. One day, Mansour finds a five-lira note on the street which he fishes before Essam can snatch it, and he runs away before Essam can catch him. Fights over the banknote start at home, with each member of the family claiming the right to it. For five weeks, Mansour’s fist is clenched around the banknote before he is eventually about to lose his life under the wheels of a van on his daily journey. When he wakes up in hospital, he does not find the banknote in his pocket. He knows for sure that Essam has taken it while he was unconscious, but he cannot blame him, for this kind of behaviour is only rational during “the time of hostilities”.

Like many of Kanafani’s short stories, “The Child Goes to the Camp” has a child protagonist through whose perspective the story is narrated. Allaham (2009, p. 52) suggests that having a child narrator presents misery in its purest form, so a child’s misery draws more attention and sympathy. As Hafez (1992, p. 313) puts it, Kanafani depicts in his short stories the plight of various generations of Palestinians from the older generations that were uprooted from their country and denied the right to live and die in peace in their homeland to younger generations that were born in refugee camps with all their subhuman conditions. In “The Child Goes to the Camp”, even close relations “are subject to the logic of emergency” (Collins, 2011, p. 179). Mansour recounts the fierce competitions that take place between the children over discarded food. Such ferocity does not only characterize the relationship between children; it extends to the relationship between family members. Furaihat (2010, pp. 303–304) argues that human relations are shaped by a number of values that a stable person would normally cling on to. However, with people being uprooted from their homeland and exiled, clinging on to such values declines, for an individual starts looking for solutions for his/her own problems, especially with the increase of poverty. Therefore, as Sulieman and Muhaidat (2017, p. 26) put it, “Kanafani’s characters live in an unhealthy family atmosphere” which renders them “emotionally disturbed” and results in distorted bonds between members of the same family, which is evident in the relationships between the family members in “The Child Goes to the Camp”. In an attempt to investigate the effects of refugee life on the human psyche, the following section presents an analysis of Kanafani’s story to explore how psychologically disturbed people could become due to the poor living conditions in refugee camps. As a theory of evaluation, the Appraisal Theory is used to analyse the story to reveal the miserable conditions in refugee camps, as well as their effects on the human psyche, and subsequently morals, as revealed through the perspective of a child.

5. Analysis

This section presents an appraisal analysis of Ghassan Kanafani’s “The Child Goes to the Camp” in an attempt to investigate how refugee life affects the psyche of the narrator’s family

as well as their family bonds. In terms of Attitude, the linguistic choices made by Mansour, the narrator, are revealing of his feelings (affect), evaluation of his family (judgement) and evaluation of the different aspects of refugee life (appreciation).

Mansour starts his narrative with introducing his view of the life of the Palestinian refugees after the Nakba, describing it as “زمن الاشتباك” (the time of hostilities). This expression is frequently repeated throughout the story to describe the conditions Palestinians lived under in refugee camps, a time when virtues are ignored as the only virtue becomes remaining alive. The noun phrase “زمن الاشتباك” (the time of hostilities) is a case of negative appreciation that comes under the category of composition/complexity; it reflects the narrator’s view of the complex life in refugee camps where family bonds become distorted and individuals start looking for solutions for their own problems after refugee life has left a scar on their psyche.

In subsequent paragraphs, the narrator starts to give a detailed account of refugee life, shedding light on the misery and suffering they have to endure as they are deprived of basic human rights and needs. The following extract introduces Mansour’s family members through his perspective:

كنت أسكن مع سبعة إخوة كلهم ذكور شديدو المراس، وأب لا يحب زوجته ربما لأنها أنجبت له زمن الاشتباك ثمانية أطفال. وكانت عمتنا وزوجها وأولادها الخمسة يسكنون معنا أيضاً، وجننا العجوز الذي كان إذا ما عثر على خمسة قروش على الطاولة أو في جيب أحد السراويل الكثيرة المعلقة مضى دون تردد واشترى جريدة

I lived with seven tough brothers and a father who disliked his wife, probably because she bore him eight children during the time of hostilities. Our aunt, her husband and her five children lived with us. So did our old grandfather who would unhesitantly steal any little money he would find on the table or in the pocket of one of the many hanging trousers in order to buy a newspaper.

In these lines, the narrator makes use of the category of judgement to express his view of his family members. Describing his brothers as “تشدبو المراس” (tough) is a case of direct negative judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/tenacity. It shows how refugee life has left its marks on this generation, for harsh life is only expected to create tough personalities. The description also foreshadows the children’s violent reaction the minute Mansour arrives home with the banknote later. The old grandfather is presented as a thief; the relative clause “الذي كان إذا” (who) “ما عثر على خمسة قروش على الطاولة أو في جيب أحد السراويل الكثيرة المعلقة مضى دون تردد واشترى جريدة” (who would unhesitantly steal any little money he would find on the table or in the pocket of the many hanging trousers to buy a newspaper) is a case of indirect negative judgement that comes under the category of social sanction/propriety. The grandfather is represented as a dishonest person who steals money to buy newspapers. Though represented as a person with no ethics, the grandfather’s behaviour can be regarded as one of the effects of the Nakba on the psyche and personality of refugees. According to Farag (2017, p. 26), “[t]he Arab defeat in 1948 brought a loss of faith, despair, disbelief, and demoralization, which deeply affected the collective Arab psyche”, hence distorting their behaviour. As Furaihat (2010, p. 305) puts it, as a result of living under such inhumane conditions in refugee camps, “an individual might accept what he/she would not have accepted under normal circumstances” (translation mine). It is worth mentioning, however, that although the grandfather is depicted negatively by the narrator (the grandson), he does not in fact steal money for his own pleasure; he needs the money to buy newspapers to follow the news of his homeland, which he is nostalgic for, the land he wishes he could go back to. In a way, the readers are invited both to condemn the grandfather’s act and sympathize with him at the same time. Through the category of judgement, the narrator manages to highlight the effects of refugee life on his family’s behaviour.

The narrator also makes use of the category of affect to describe his father’s feelings towards his mother. The father is described as “أب لا يحب زوجته ربما لأنها أنجبت له ومن الاشتباك ثمانية أطفال” (a

father who disliked his wife, probably because she bore him eight children during the time of hostilities). The verb phrase “لا يحب” (disliked) is an example of direct negative affect that comes under the category of dissatisfaction. Although under normal circumstances a father would be proud of having eight male children, the last thing a Palestinian father living in a refugee camp would wish for is to have all those mouths to feed. Shouldering the responsibility of eight children, in addition to the rest of the family, makes things worse amidst the misery and poverty the family suffers from, the poverty which led the family to live on leftovers collected from the food market.

After Mansour introduces his family members, he presents a picture of the hardships they have to endure in the refugee camp. This is instrumental in foreshadowing the change of their morals and the fights that are to follow finding the banknote:

كنا ثمانية عشر شخصاً في بيت واحد من جميع الأجيال التي يمكن أن تتوفر في وقت واحد. لم يكن أي واحد منا قد نجح بعد في الحصول على عمل، وكان الجوع – الذي تسمع عنه – همنا اليومي. ذلك أسميه زمن الاشتباك. أنت تعلم. لا فرق على الإطلاق. كنا نقاتل من أجل الأكل، ثم نقاتل لنوزعه فيما بيننا، ثم نقاتل بعد ذلك

We were 18 people living together, 18 people from all the generations that could exist at the same time. None of us had managed yet to find a job, and hunger, that you merely hear of, was our daily concern. I call that time the time of hostilities. There is no difference, you know. We would fight for food, we would fight to distribute it among us, and then we would fight again.

Mansour in this extract comments on the circumstances under which the family lives in the camp as well as the kind of atmosphere that prevails among them. He starts by stating that three generations of Palestinians lived in the refugee camp. In Farag’s words, the text could be seen as revealing of “the gap between the older generation that left Palestine” (represented by the grandfather’s and father’s generations) and the young *jil al-nakba* (Generation of Catastrophe) that was “born and raised, knowing nothing other than exile and displacement” and that “has grown stateless and in exile ever since” (2017, pp. 96-97). This discrepancy could be seen as one reason behind the unhealthy relationships between the family members.

To present his view of the circumstances the family lives under, Mansour makes use of the category of appreciation. The sentence “كنا ثمانية عشر شخصاً في بيت واحد من جميع الأجيال التي يمكن أن تتوفر في وقت واحد” (we were 18 people living together, 18 people from all the generations that could exist at the same time) is a case of indirect negative appreciation that comes under the category of composition/balance. The narrator seems to imply that this is a huge number of people living in a small space, which causes all the problems and tension that prevail in the camp. One of the major problems that the family faces is hunger, which is described using the noun phrase “همنا اليومي” (our daily concern). This noun phrase is a case of negative direct appreciation that comes under the category of composition/complexity. It shows how food, which is a basic human need, is a far-fetched dream in the refugee camp. The narrator even describes hunger as “الجوع الذي تسمع عنه” (hunger, which you merely hear of) to draw a contrast between ordinary people, who merely hear of hunger, and refugees who are always on the verge of starvation.

In addition to appreciation, the narrator also makes use of the category of judgement to show how people behave during the time of hostilities. The verb phrase “لم يكن أي واحد منا قد نجح بعد في الحصول على عمل” (none of us had managed yet to find a job) is a case of indirect negative judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/capacity. It shows the family’s inability to find a job so they could fulfill their basic needs, chief among which is food. This explains their aggressive behaviour when it comes to distributing the little food they sometimes manage to get. The verbs “نقاتل” (fight) and “ننقاتل” (fight each other) are cases of direct negative judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/capacity. Whatever strength the family

members have is directed to fights among themselves rather than to any other purpose. In terms of graduation, both verbs come under the category of force as they are both examples of attitudinal lexis, a term which refers to “vocabulary items that include degrees of intensity” (Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 43). Both verbs, which are used to describe the disagreements among the family, show a high degree of intensity; they do not merely “quarrel” but rather “fight”. In normal circumstances, family members are usually caring for each other and attending for each other’s needs. In the “time of hostilities”, even family bonds are distorted, and a person only cares for their own happiness. This shows the effect the Nakba had on the psyche of many Palestinians who were forced to live in refugee camps.

After describing the family’s life in the poor-stricken camp, the narrator moves on to describing how they struggle to get on, and how he and his cousin Essam become the breadwinners of the family, hence highlighting the intensified suffering of Palestinian refugees, especially children:

وكنت مع عصام في العاشرة – كان أضخم مني قليلاً كما هو الآن[...]. وكان يعتبر نفسه زعيم إخوته أبناء عمتي – كما كنتُ
أعتبر نفسي زعيم إخوتي[...]. وبعد محاولات عديدة استطاع والذي وزوج عمتي أن يجدا لنا مهنة يومية: نحمل السلّة الكبيرة معاً
ونسير حوالي ساعة وربع حتى نصل إلى سوق الخضار بعد العصر بقليل [...] وكانت مهمتنا أنا و عصام هينة وصعبة في آن
واحد[...]. فقد كان يتعين علينا أن نجد ما نعبئ به سلتنا

Essam and I were both ten. His body was a bit bigger than mine, and, like me, he considered himself a leader of his siblings. It took my father and my uncle several attempts till they managed to find us a daily job: we would carry the big basket together and walk for about an hour and a quarter till we reached the vegetable market a little bit late in the afternoon. Our task was simple yet hard; we were supposed to fill our basket [...]

In this extract, the narrator makes use of the categories of judgement and appreciation. The adjective “أضخم” (bigger), used to describe Essam, is the superlative form of the adjective “ضخم” (big). Describing Essam as “big” is a case of direct judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/capacity. Essam is not only “big” but also “bigger” than the narrator. Such a description foreshadows the fierce battle that will be ignited between both the moment the narrator finds the banknote. This meaning is intensified by the two sentences “كان يعتبر نفسه زعيم إخوته” (he considered himself a leader of his siblings) and “كنتُ أعتبر نفسي زعيم إخوتي” (I considered myself a leader of mine). Both sentences are cases of direct judgement that come under the category of social esteem/tenacity. Both boys have big bodies and both behave like “leaders”, which, again, foreshadows their fierce fight over the banknote. The verb phrase “استطاع” (managed to), combined with the prepositional phrase “بعد” (after several attempts), is a case of indirect judgement, which comes under the category of social esteem/capacity. The verb “استطاع” (managed to) reveals how difficult finding a job is for Palestinian refugees, which explains why hunger is a daily concern for them. Describing the task assigned to Mansour and Essam as “هينة” (simple yet hard) is a case of appreciation which comes under the category of composition/complexity; although their task is simple (i.e. collecting food leftovers), it is still a difficult task as they have to fight for this simple food, which reflects the inhumane conditions Palestinian refugees live under. Mansour gives more details about these fights in the following lines:

كان عصام يندفع كالسهم ليخطف رأس ملفوف ممزق أو حزمة بصل، وربما تفاحة من بين عجلات الشاحنة وهي تتأهب للتحرك،
وكنت أنا بدوري أتصدى للشياطين – أي بقية الأطفال – إذا ما حاولوا تناول برتقالة شهدتها في الوحل قبلهم. وكنا نعمل طوال
العصر

Essam would dart like an arrow to snatch a cut cabbage, a bunch of onions or maybe an apple that had fallen under the wheels of a truck getting ready to move. I, on the other hand, would face the devils – or the other children – who would try to snatch an orange that I had seen in the mud before they did. We would work the whole afternoon.

In this extract, the narrator makes extensive use of metaphors which are cases of judgement. According to [Martin and Rose \(2007, p. 34\)](#), metaphor “plays a role in judging characters”. The metaphor “كان عصام يندفع كالسهم” (Essam would dart like an arrow) is a case of judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/capacity. In this metaphor, Essam is compared to an arrow, which shows how both powerful and quick Essam is as he is trying to get the food leftovers before anyone else. On the other hand, the other children, whom the narrator faces, are likened to “devils” in the metaphor “وكننت أصدى بدوري للشياطين” (I, on the other hand, would face the devils). Describing the other children as “devils” is a case of indirect negative judgement that comes under the category of social sanction/propriety; the metaphor indicates how unethical the other children are viewed by the narrator when they, in fact, are only after food leftovers just like him. This indicates the fierce competition between the children when all they need is food which is a basic human need. Moreover, they are not even quarreling over food, but food leftovers, which reveals the suffering they have to endure only to survive. In addition, the phrase “كنا نعمل طوال العصر” (we would work the whole afternoon) is another case of judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/tenacity and that is another indicator of the suffering of those little children when children their age living under different circumstances are enjoying their childhood and maybe going to school. It shows how Palestinians living in refugee camps, especially children, are deprived of their most basic rights after their land was usurped.

The battle over the banknote is only expected amidst the inhumane circumstances the characters live under. The sentence “وكان الشتاء شديد القسوة ذلك العام الملعون، وكنا نحمل سلة ثقيلة حقاً” (In that accursed year, winter was extremely cruel, and we were carrying a really heavy basket) includes instances of appreciation that are indicative of suffering and need. Describing winter as “شديد القسوة” (extremely cruel) and the year as “ملعون” (accursed) is extremely telling. They are both cases of direct negative appreciation that come under the category of reaction/quality. They are revealing of the miserable circumstances in refugee camps. The same goes for the adjective “ثقيلة” (heavy) which is used to describe the basket. Moreover, in terms of graduation, the word “شديد” (very) is an intensifier as it shows the degree of cruelty, so it is a case of force which is revealing of the degree of suffering refugees continue to experience. In addition, these examples explain the aggressive behaviour of the children fighting over the food leftovers and foreshadow the fierce battle over the banknote which is, in fact, a very small sum of money.

The scene in which Mansour finds the five-lira note is the turning point of the story. Snatching it before his cousin or any of the children can lay hands on it foreshadows the fierce fight that is to take place when he arrives home. Such a little sum of money is enough to unleash the monster that is now lying inside the impoverished refugees after refugee life has deprived many of them of their morals and, to a great extent, their humanity:

كنت قد اندفعت تحت وطأة تلك القوة المجهولة التي تجبر وحيد القرن على هجوم أعمى، غابته آخر الأرض، ونطحت ساقي الشرطي بكتفي فترجع مذعوراً. وكان توازني أنا الآخر قد اختل. ولكني لم أقع على الأرض – وفي تلك اللحظة التي يحسب فيها الأغباء أن لا شيء يمكن له أن يحدث – شاهدتها: كانت خمس ليرات. لم أشاهدها فحسب بل التقطتها واستكملت سقوطي. إلا أنني وقفت بأسرع مما سقطت وبدأت أركض بأسرع مما توقعت

I was driven by a mysterious force, the kind of force that would drive a rhinoceros to blindly attack an enemy in the other side of the planet. I hit the policeman with my shoulder, so he retreated fearfully. I lost my balance too, but I did not fall. In a moment when only a stupid

person would think that nothing would happen, I saw it: a five-lira banknote. I did not only see it; I picked it and then fell to the ground. But I stood up quickly, and I ran to the best of my ability.

This scene in which Mansour finds the banknote and snatches it involves cases of appreciation and judgement. The force which drives him to run hysterically to pick the banknote before anyone is described as “مجهولة” (mysterious) and is compared to the force that drives a rhinoceros. This is a case of appreciation that comes under the category of reaction/impact. This force controls him and urges him to run to pick the banknote before the other children do. Although this is a small sum of money, it is a fortune that lures the narrator to fight hard for it. The phrases “الشرطي بكتفينطحت ساقتي” (I hit the policeman with my shoulder), “وقفت بأسرع مما سقطت” (I stood up quickly) and “بدأت أركض بأسرع مما توقعت” (I ran to the best of my ability) are all cases of judgement that come under the category of social esteem/tenacity. They all show how determined the narrator is to have the banknote and not sacrifice it under any circumstances. They are also reflecting of the poverty he lives under, which leads him to be ready to sacrifice his life for a five-lira note which he views it as a fortune.

Hell breaks loose when Mansour arrives home. He describes this moment, saying “كان السبعة عشر مخلوقاً في البيت ينتظرونني. وقد درسوني بسرعة، ولكن بدقة، حين وقفت في حلق الباب أبادلهم النظر: كفي مطبقة على الخمس ليرات في جيبتي، وقدماي ثابتتان في الأرض” (The seventeen creatures at home were waiting for me. They studied me quickly, but carefully, while I stood at the doorstep exchanging looks with them. My hand was clenched around the five-lira note in my pocket and my feet fixed to the ground). This scene brings to mind a picture of the battlefield where two enemies are watching each other carefully before they indulge in a fight. The linguistic choices Mansour makes reflect an eminent war. The expression “سبعة عشر مخلوقاً” (seventeen creatures) is a case of indirect negative judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/normality. Humans cease to be humans and transform into subhuman “creatures” that are ready to fight for five liras. The phrases “يراتكفي مطبقة على الخمس ل” (my hand was clenched around the five-lira note) and “قدماي ثابتتان في الأرض” (my feet fixed to the ground) are cases of indirect judgement that come under the category of social esteem/tenacity. They show the narrator’s determinacy and resolution not to lose the banknote as well as his readiness to fight for it until his last breath. Mansour does not wait for long before the fight starts. Mansour describes the family as “جن جنونهم، ضاع رابط الدم فوقوا جميعاً ضدي” (They went mad. The blood bond was lost, and they were all against me). The phrase “جن جنونهم” (they went mad) is a case of judgement that comes under the category of social esteem/normality. The banknote drives them out of their senses to the extent that they start beating the little boy to get hold of it. The verb phrase “ضاع رابط الدم” (the blood bond was lost) is a case of appreciation that comes under the category of composition/balance. Family bonds, which are normally characterized by warmth and compassion, are toxic and unbalanced in Mansour’s house. Blood is no longer thicker than water when a five-lira note is everybody’s target. This indicates how ruthless the family members have become after refugee life with all its misery has left a scar on their psyche, almost depriving them of their humanity.

Mansour eventually loses the banknote after he loses consciousness when he is hit by a van and then is taken to hospital. He is almost sure that Essam has taken it for he can see it in his eyes, but he is not angry with him. In the sentence “لم أكن غاضباً لأنه كان” (I was not angry with him for being busy with taking the five lira note while I was bleeding. I was only sad for losing it), the adjective “ملهي” (busy) is a case of judgement that comes under the category of social sanction/propriety. Essam is presented as lacking ethics for stealing the money while his cousin is bleeding. However, Mansour is not angry with

Essam as he understands his feelings. The phrase “لم أكن غاضبًا” (I was not angry) is a case of affect that is manifested through disposition and that comes under the category of un-satisfaction. Not being angry is not the feeling the narrator is expected to have, but Mansour, in fact, cannot blame Essam as he understands the impact refugee life has left on him. The adjectives “حزين” (sad), though, is another case of affect; it is manifested through disposition, and it comes under the category of unhappiness. Sadness is a normal feeling for losing this little sum of money which is a fortune for the refugee child. However, Mansour knows how people are affected by refugee life, which leads them to lose their morals and humanity in the time of hostilities.

6. Conclusion

The Nakba is the biggest tragedy in Palestinian history for it led to the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Since literature is a mirror of society, the Nakba has become a key theme in many Palestinian literary works, chief among which are the works of Ghassan Kanafani. Being once a refugee who experienced life in refugee camps, many of Kanafani's works reveal the suffering of Palestinians who lived in refugee camps, and his short story “The Child Goes to the Camp” is a case in point. Analysing the story using the Appraisal Theory reveals the impact refugee life has left on the narrator and his family. This story serves a warning for the world of the suffering refugees have to endure when they forced to flee their war-torn countries.

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